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General Assembly

Sixtieth session

Official Records

95th plenary meeting
Thursday, 20 July 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Diarra (Mali), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda items 117 and 120 (continued)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Ms. Løj (Denmark): I am grateful for the convening of this meeting of the General Assembly and would like to express my delegation's gratitude to the President of the Assembly for his determined effort to bring forward the United Nations reform agenda. The Assembly has already taken action in a significant number of areas, and subsequent work is progressing. Let me take this opportunity to assure the Assembly of Denmark's continued support for the reform of the United Nations.

At the 2005 world summit, heads of State or Government declared support for early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations. The conclusion of the sixtieth session is approaching, and so far we have made only limited progress on the Security Council reform issue. Allow me to briefly restate Denmark's position.

The present composition of the Security Council is a reflection of a world that no longer exists. The Council must continue to play a decisive role in the promotion of peace, security, human rights and democracy. But if it is to do so more effectively, broader representation is needed. Denmark supports expanding the Council by increasing the number of permanent members and non-permanent seats and by including developing and developed countries as permanent members. By doing so, we would make the voices representing the broader membership much stronger and thereby enhance the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of Security Council decisions — effectiveness in the sense that the collective pressure to adhere to Council decisions would increase.

But reform of the Security Council goes far beyond the question of the expansion of the membership. It is also very much a matter of addressing the issue of working methods. The need for more transparency and inclusiveness in the work of the Security Council vis-à-vis the general membership is imminent.

In that regard, we welcome the work being done by the Security Council on improving its working methods, which includes efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work, as well as stronger interaction and dialogue with non-Council members. We look forward to the full implementation of the improved working methods and welcome the intention expressed by the Security

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Council to continue to consider ways to improve its working methods.

As we all know too well, this issue has been on our agenda for 13 years. It is time now to move from reflection to action. It is time to compromise. We need a stronger United Nations — a United Nations better suited to addressing the new threats and challenges the world is facing — and reform of the Security Council is an integral part of that effort.

Mr. Butagira (Uganda): The Uganda delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador of Algeria on behalf of the African Group.

On the issue of the expansion of the Security Council, Africa's position is clear and unambiguous — we call for no less than two permanent seats with a veto, and five non-permanent seats. We have listened to other proposals, but we still maintain our position. One may say that we are not realistic or that we are obstinate, but ours is a principled stand. We are the only continent without a permanent seat on the Security Council, despite our size and influence. True, the existence of veto-wielding powers on the Security Council is an anomaly and anachronistic, and ideally, that arrangement should not be emulated by extending veto to new entrants, but so long as the veto exists, we do not want to join as second-class so-called permanent members.

We think we can wage the fight in two stages. First, the new permanent members should have the right of veto. In the second stage, we would strive to abolish the veto and have a truly democratic Security Council. In the meantime, let us tackle a less problematic issue — the expansion of the category of non-permanent members. I believe that could be done.

My delegation also thinks we can improve on the working methods of the Security Council, since that does not involve an amendment of the Charter. In that regard, my delegation is of the view that a draft resolution entitled "Improving the working methods of the Security Council", submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore, deserves support.

Mr. Adekanye (Nigeria): On behalf of the delegation of Nigeria, I have the honour to express our gratitude to Mr. Eliasson for scheduling this General Assembly debate on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, as well as the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit. This coincides with Nigeria's expectations that Security Council reform will not be permanently deferred. Indeed, it is also consistent with the decision of our leaders in September 2005.

At the outset, let me state that Nigeria fully associates itself with the African position conveyed by the Permanent Representative of Algeria this morning.

It has always been the view of Nigeria that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without a fundamental reform and increase in the size and the composition of the Security Council. Moreover, such reform should accommodate the legitimate claim of Africa to representation on the Council in the permanent membership category. We believe that such an outcome would reflect the new realities and thereby enable the Council to gain in stature and credibility, as well as ensure that its decisions attract the wider support of the international community.

Africa's position on Security Council reform has been defined in the decisions taken by African heads of State and Government at the fifth and sixth ordinary sessions of the Assembly of the African Union in Sirte in July 2005, Khartoum in January 2006, and most recently in Banjul. The fact is that the issues raised in the debate on Security Council reform, for which we have canvassed over the years and in the past months, remain clear. Just as the General Assembly took the decision to establish the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, the time is ripe to act decisively on Security Council reform. It would do a great disservice to our Organization if Member States were to continue to prevaricate on this matter.

Nigeria respects the viewpoints of those Member States that insist on the need for consensus before such a decision is taken. However, we equally recognize that, in the greater national interests of our respective peoples, we rarely allow the search for consensus to inhibit important decisions. It is essential therefore that, in the interests and for the future of our Organization, we make every effort to bring all Member States on board on this issue without losing sight of our primary goal. That may well entail some element of flexibility, but flexibility that is informed by a shared view that Council reform in all its aspects is long overdue.

If we proceed along that path, Nigeria is confident that we should, in the immediate future, achieve that goal and thereby not only rekindle the hopes and confidence of humankind in the United Nations, but also prove wrong its vocal critics who wrongly argue that Member States, individually and collectively, cannot rise to the challenges of true multilateralism. Let us send forth from this hallowed Hall a clear message of our common resolve not to let slip yet another opportunity to address this matter once and for all.

There are also those who believe that the States Members of this Organization should be content with merely tinkering with the working methods of the Security Council, and that that would better serve the interests of the broad membership. Although the full implications of such a position for the overall United Nations reform have been the subject of discussions and informal consultations in the past, Nigeria considers it necessary to restate that such an approach would hardly address the fundamental inequity that the Council, as presently constituted, represents.

I wish to recall that it was against this background that Nigeria last December resubmitted, on behalf of Africa, the African draft resolution on Security Council reform. For us, the reform of the Security Council should bring gains to all regions. It should also address the fundamental imbalance in the Council's composition.

In the pursuit of that objective, Nigeria maintains an open mind. We remain open to negotiations. However, for such negotiations to bear fruit, they must be based on the recognition of the fundamental view that, as Africa is the only region without representation in the permanent membership category of the Security Council, its legitimate aspirations should be addressed. Nigeria therefore identifies with those Member States whose initiatives boldly and largely take into account Africa's primary interests and concerns on Security Council reform.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): On behalf of the Brazilian delegation, I would like to thank the presidency for convening this plenary meeting. Its timeliness is determined not only by the importance of the issues themselves, but also by the need for the General Assembly to fully comply with the relevant provisions of the outcome document as regards the issue of Security Council reform. We expect progress on this long-standing question, just as we have advanced in resolving other important issues relating to the institutional reform of our Organization.

In matters of international peace and security, the continued importance of the Security Council rests upon its unique position in international law and politics, its pivotal role within the body of law relating to the use of force, and its power to determine and enforce any measure necessary to restore international peace and security.

It is a well-known fact that, after the end of the cold war, the Security Council became much more active. Over 1,000 resolutions have been adopted over the past 15 years, compared to 644 in the previous 45 years. Yet, that remarkable increase in activity has not, unfortunately, resulted in a comparable reduction in threats to international peace and security.

Current events in different regions of the world underscore the need for the Security Council fully to perform the role envisaged for it by the United Nations Charter. The need for effective collective measures to re-establish confidence and settle international disputes is even more evident at a time when regional tensions continue to escalate, conflicts continue to be a daily reality, and civilian populations continue to suffer mounting casualties.

The expansion of the Council so that it may more adequately reflect contemporary realities and the present composition of the Organization is therefore indispensable. Only a profound reform that corrects the current imbalances in its structure, resulting in a Council that is more democratic and representative, with new members in its permanent and non-permanent categories from both the developing and the developed world, will confer on the Council the degree of credibility and legitimacy necessary for it to more effectively address the new threats and challenges we face.

Nearly all Members of the Organization agree that there is a pressing need for change. A large majority has emerged with similar or coinciding views on what a reformed Council should look like. That body of opinion cuts across regional and political groupings and includes two permanent members of the Security Council, whose active engagement was recently reaffirmed in the Franco-United Kingdom joint communiqué of 9 June.

All that take part in that majority view are fully aware of the issues at stake. Brazil continues to work within the context of the Group of Four and with the membership at large with a view to achieving an expansion of the Security Council that reflects the Group's basic positions and assures an expansion that is both meaningful and workable.

The most important aspect of Security Council reform is that of membership and representation. That does not mean belittling the need to update and adapt its working methods. We have our own proposals on the subject and we acknowledge the serious efforts being made by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" — but unless the question of membership is adequately dealt with, fundamental issues, such as the imbalance in representation and the need for greater legitimacy, will remain. In order to truly make a difference, Security Council reform must address that body's current structural imbalance. Any partial solution will simply perpetuate its legitimacy deficit.

Proposals on the table share the concern over the need for further measures to ensure the accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of the work of the Security Council. Ideas are coming together in the recognition that developing countries should take part in the membership increase in both categories and that working methods should be properly addressed. The time has thus come for a process of dialogue and consultations among those that share many similarities and concerns with a view to reaching an early decision on the issue. Such a process would amount to a significant step in the consideration of the issue and would facilitate the necessary convergence of positions.

Our common goal should be to bring about a reform that allows for a correction of the historical imbalance in the composition of the Council, which today excludes entire regions of the developing world from the permanent member category. Terms such as "general agreement", "overwhelming majority" and "broadest possible consensus" have been used to refer to the threshold needed for the approval of matters relating to reform.

The search for consensus, however, must not become, as some would like, an end in itself. Consensus in a reform process should be sought on the basis of majority positions. In that process, all points of view should be respected. Consensus is indeed desirable, but the recent creation of both the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council reminds us that consensus is not really required by our Charter and is not politically indispensable. It must not, in any case, serve as an excuse not to take a decision.

Those who believe in Security Council reform as a way of transforming the Organization, allowing it to become more effective in tackling current threats and challenges, can count on us not only to carry forth this vision but also to struggle for it to become the next major achievement in the Organization's programme of reforms. Inaction contributes to the weakening of collective security measures and of multilateralism as a whole. It will be up to all of us to decide on this most fundamental issue of our time. It is only fitting that we should do so in the General Assembly, the only universally representative international body — and do so with the use of all democratic means.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): This session of the General Assembly is taking place against the backdrop of far-reaching reform processes. This work, despite the difficult and often heated debate, confirms the need to find the broadest possible agreement among Member States — ideally, consensus — to achieve progress on the whole range of United Nations reforms. That approach is fully relevant and indeed necessary with regard to reform of the Security Council. Differences in positions on this issue continue to be large, and none of the proposed models for enlarging the Security Council yet enjoys the necessary support from United Nations Members. We are convinced that we should continue to seek a common denominator on the basis of collective efforts.

It is in the interest of all not to allow any expansion of the membership of the Security Council that could have a negative impact on other elements of the reform process in the Organization or on the broad mandate of the United Nations in addressing urgent international issues. At the same time, it is difficult not agree with the view that, without Security Council reform, the overall reform of the United Nations will be incomplete.

Russia's basic position on this issue has not changed. We are ready to conscientiously consider any possible sensible approach to expanding the membership of the Security Council, if it is based on

the broadest possible agreement within the United Nations, beyond the legally required two-thirds majority of members of the General Assembly.

A key element continues to be the need to increase the effectiveness of the Council and to provide it with a more representative character, but not at the expense of its effectiveness, since it is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is for that reason that we advocate maintaining a limited membership of the Council. We are convinced that it would be counterproductive to limit the prerogatives of the current permanent members of the Security Council, including the right of veto.

We support, and actively take part in, the Council's efforts, based on the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1), to improve its working methods. In recent times, the members of the Security Council have made progress in improving the transparency and effectiveness of the work of the Council. We highly commend the significant work by the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions under the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Japan, Ambassador Oshima.

Following six months of its work, on 19 July 2006, the Security Council endorsed a note by its President (S/2006/507), which laid out the positive developments with respect to the functioning of the Council. We would like to stress that any initiative to improve the working methods of the Council not based on consensus and with the support of all members would not provide any progress in the comprehensive reform of the Security Council, and would not be a positive contribution to resolving the problem of achieving agreement on all aspects of Security Council reform. We hope that that will not be the case.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): Let me begin by thanking you, Sir, and all delegations for your expressions of sympathy and solidarity regarding this week's tsunami in Indonesia's Java island, in which hundreds have been killed and thousands rendered homeless. We are truly grateful for your thoughtfulness and support.

I also wish to express my thanks for the convening of this debate under agenda items 117 and 120.

The United Nations has an agenda full of items that have been a focus of attention for considerable periods of time. This issue is one of the longest-standing, most intricate and most important of them. We have been discussing this issue with great intensity for a long time, and my delegation is concerned at the fact that our efforts have not yet resulted in much progress.

It is well known that Indonesia strongly advocates comprehensive reform of the Security Council, with the sole objective of making it more representative, efficient, transparent and accountable. It will be recalled that, last September, world leaders too endorsed the early realization of this objective. We believe that this reform will strengthen the Council and enhance its legitimacy and credibility, which are important factors in mobilizing Member States in the implementation of its decisions.

In this statement, we would like to focus on the working methods of the Council. This part of the comprehensive reform of the Council is equally significant and deserves the same attention as the issue of the expansion of Security Council membership. My delegation believes that, while the question of representation on the Council is of the greatest importance, we must keep in mind at all times why it is important. It is to ensure that the Council which emerges in the course of the reform process carries with it the credibility of the entire international community by becoming more efficient, transparent, representative and accountable.

In the past, regrettably, the methods that the Council has sometimes adopted in its work, such as unscheduled debates, selective notification of some debates and the reluctance to discuss certain issues in open debate, have left many Member States with a lot of questions. We feel that those flaws need to be, and can be, corrected. My delegation believes that the ability of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security would be strengthened if the Council encouraged greater participation and contributions by Member States in its work.

To this end, we note that the Council is currently taking steps to address the concerns of Member States on this issue. It remains our view that the Council should increase the number of open meetings at which the views of Member States are heard as input into the work of the Council. That is in contrast to open meetings where members speak moments before the Council announces a decision or adopts a resolution on

the subject at hand. It would be more meaningful for such a decision or adoption to be considered with the views of Member States in mind.

Indeed, there is no doubt that the credibility of the Council will be further strengthened when it also engages in regular, substantive exchanges of views with the other major organs, particularly the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Along with consultations with Council members and non-members, that would deeply enrich the pool of information and ideas that the Council can tap into for its decision-making.

We also share the view that briefings by special envoys or representatives of the Secretary-General or by the committees of the Council should take place as much as possible in an open format.

The principal business of the Council being the maintenance of international peace and security, we believe that it serves the Council best also to strengthen its relationship with troop contributors through regular interaction, rather than during the crush of mission planning or mandate negotiation. Such interaction, needless to say, would also be helpful in the necessary transitions that often occur in the life of a peacekeeping mission.

With reference to the substance of the Council's discussions, I would like to reiterate the necessity that the Council remain within the purview of its Charter mandate. It must scrupulously avoid the temptation to address such issues as those belonging within the purview of the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council.

Furthermore, in the interest of accountability and the spirit of the Charter, my delegation would like to reiterate its concern about the quality of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly. For many years, many delegations, including my own, have indicated their desire for a report with more depth, information and analysis. Regrettably, this desire has not been met, and the report of the Security Council has continued to be no more than information and statistics that most delegations already possess. The annual report should not be treated as a bureaucratic formality for one simple reason: neither the business of the General Assembly nor the maintenance of international peace and security is a formality.

Finally, I wish to underline the concern of my delegation concerning the process of the selection of the Secretary-General. Few other issues can better reflect the commitment of any Member State to true reform of the Organization than transparency in the selection of its principal officer. Member States would therefore like to see Council efforts to increase the transparency of this process, as well as an enhanced role for the General Assembly.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the General Assembly, for organizing this debate, which invites us once again to reflect on the issue of Security Council reform, an exercise that has always been desirable, important and necessary. My thanks go also to you, Sir, for presiding over today's meetings.

The balance sheet of our collective work on reform of the Organization is positive. We have new organs that we hope will help overcome the difficult and complex situations of today's world. We have started a process of in-depth review of the administrative functioning of the Organization; we believe this is necessary to revitalize it and provide it with the dynamism it needs.

However, the zeal to reform has minimized the negotiation process through which lasting consensus is reached. The move from negotiation to intergovernmental consultation has weakened the capacity for agreement and mutual understanding. Negotiation enables one to know and appreciate another's perception, but consultations through facilitators and speeches do not allow the degree of interaction and understanding necessary to achieve the solid consensus required for long-term solutions.

We believe we have to resume intergovernmental negotiation. We believe that only in that way will the trust and the relationships based on cooperation that must characterize this unique multilateral and universal organ be renewed, and only in that way will we have solid organ that respond to the major challenges we face today.

In this context, I return to the issue of Security Council reform. We see that yesterday's differences are still present today. We see that the determination to achieve a reform inclusive of the majority and with firm respect for sovereign equality is more valid than ever before. The use of closed formats to reach agreements in the past has yielded neither positive

results nor foundations on which lasting agreements can be built.

We believe that Security Council reform lacking consensus will only bring greater divisions and perhaps even the gradual loss of the Council's legitimacy because of a composition that establishes and perpetuates privileges that run counter to the principles of sovereign equality and the reality of today's international system.

We believe that the reform of that principal organ must be inclusive and transparent. There must be open and direct negotiation among Member States until a formula satisfactory to all and guaranteeing the unity of the Members of the Organization is found.

Colombia, along with the Uniting for Consensus movement, has proposed a formula that seeks to integrate the majorities through regional autonomy taking account of the characteristics of each group. Our proposal is based on giving each region the capacity to present the members that will represent it in the Council, as well as the frequency of their rotation. Our proposal is democratic, allows for accountability, is flexible and fair and gives regions the importance they have in today's world. Our proposal is a good-faith effort to avoid an all-or-nothing showdown, as was said by Ambassador Allan Rock of Canada during the introduction of draft resolution A/59/L.68 (see A/59/PV.115).

We know there are other alternatives. That is why we believe that through committed and direct negotiation among States we can find a consensus that helps rebuild the trust so much of which has been lost in recent months, but which is ever more necessary.

Our proposal, as we have reiterated many times as active members of the Uniting for Consensus movement and in our national capacity, is to begin negotiating directly and transparently among States, without intermediaries, until we find a consensus formula that, after 13 years of trying, will reform the Security Council.

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this debate under agenda items 117, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council", and 120, "Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit". We view this as a timely opportunity to further discuss aspects related to the reform of the United Nations, in keeping with the mandate entrusted to us by our leaders as part of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

At the world summit, our leaders supported early reform of the Security Council and recognized such reform as an essential element in the overall effort to reform the United Nations. Now that there has been progress on reform, including in the areas of peace, development and human rights and in certain institutional aspects of the work of the Secretariat, there should now be some real movement in terms of the security aspect of the equation. There can be no question that any meaningful and comprehensive reform of the United Nations must contemplate reform of the international security architecture in order to strengthen the reform already carried out in other areas.

At this juncture, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the work carried out by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council, including by the current Vice-Chairs, the Permanent Representatives of the Bahamas and of the Netherlands.

Jamaica reaffirms the responsibility entrusted to the Security Council under Article 24 of the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, acting on behalf of the wider membership of the Organization. We are of the view that it is necessary for the Council to be reformed in order to make it more open, transparent, democratic, accountable and effective.

We are all agreed that geopolitical realities have changed fundamentally since the establishment of the United Nations. It is therefore only logical that the Council should reflect the contemporary international community as a whole, based on equitable geographic representation and the increased representation of developing countries.

It is on that basis that Jamaica has taken the position that there should be expansion in both categories of the membership of the Council with increased representation from all regional groups. As a principle, we share the view that there should be no discrimination in the rights, privileges and status accorded to new members of the Council.

We acknowledge that there have been improvements in the way the Council conducts its business, one recent example of which has been the information provided by respective Presidents of the Council on the procedure and process for the selection of a new Secretary-General to lead this Organization. We also note that the Permanent Representative of Japan has been conducting consultations within the Council on ways to improve its working methods and look forward to receiving continued updates on the work of the Council in that regard.

We continue to underscore the importance of transparency and accountability in the work of the Council. It is also imperative to affirm that the development of norms related to international law as well as treaty-making are best left to the deliberations of the General Assembly and the involvement of the wider membership. The division of labour between the two organs must be respected.

In accordance with the principles of the Charter, it is important that the Security Council consider and act upon matters that pose an immediate threat to international peace and security. In that context, the Council should be prepared to take urgent action in situations that endanger the lives of civilians and which have the potential to result in humanitarian crises, particularly in circumstances where vital infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed. In all such situations, the permanent members of the Council should be prepared to act in an even-handed manner and limit their use of the veto.

We are now in the second decade of discussions on Security Council reform. It is perhaps time for decisive and not incremental action to make real the process of reform of the Security Council. In essence, reform should seek to enhance the legitimacy of the Council through an expanded membership that reflects balance and diversity and is based on respect for the principle of equitable representation.

To be truly effective, however, reform should go beyond expansion towards a more fundamental realignment of the existing hierarchical structure of the Council, which, as currently constituted, merely perpetuates the disparities in the global distribution of power and wealth.

We should therefore strive to act collectively on this resolve before much more time has passed.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the beginning of this year, various United Nations reforms, such as the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, have all enjoyed positive progress. Many new measures have been adopted for Secretariat management reform and the ongoing consultations on mandate review, the revitalization of the General Assembly and the counter-terrorism strategy. As has been pointed out by the President of the General Assembly, those results have been achieved through the common efforts of all Member States.

The Security Council shoulders the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The greater effectiveness of the Security Council, as one of the principal United Nations organs, has a bearing on world peace and security, as well as on the interests of all Member States. Strengthening the Council's role and authority through reform would enhance the United Nations role, promote multilateral approaches and accelerate the democratization of international relations. To that end, China has consistently and explicitly supported necessary and rational reform of the Security Council.

President Hu Jintao comprehensively set forth China's position on that issue at last year's world summit. Since the beginning of this year, China has reiterated its position on many occasions. Keeping current developments in mind, I now wish to emphasize the following three main points.

First, Security Council reform should be carried out on the basis of broad consensus if progress is to be maintained. Since the beginning of this year, a wide spectrum of discussions and consultations has been conducted on Council reform. Though a proposal acceptable to the overwhelming majority of the Member States has not yet been produced, all the parties have carefully summed up experiences and, on the basis of previous proposals, intensified their efforts to reach the broadest possible consensus. That is worthy of our appreciation and encouragement. It is the correct way to guide reform to ultimate success. China supports all measures that will advance incremental reform on the basis of broad consensus among Member States.

Secondly, Council reform should not focus exclusively on expansion. The purpose of reform is to enhance the authority and representation of the

Council. We therefore need to appropriately enlarge its composition and reform its working methods in a practical and scientific manner so as to fully reflect the constructive views of the large number of non-Council members, regional organizations and civil society. Some countries have put forward a number of suggestions and proposals that deserve our attentive consideration. At the same time, we should encourage the Council to improve itself in its own practice.

Thirdly, the key to Council reform lies in improving the representation of developing countries. Reform is not a power game, let alone a private bargain among big Powers. The many developing countries, especially those of Africa, are seriously underrepresented in the Council. Their voice is rather limited in the Council and they have few opportunities to participate fully in its decision-making. That should be the priority in the Council's enlargement. Undoubtedly, it is hard to adopt a proposal that addresses the concerns of only a few big Powers but fails to give equal treatment to or even ignores the voice of developing countries, especially medium-sized and small countries.

The sixty-first session of the General Assembly will open in September. Leaders or foreign ministers of Member States will gather once again in New York to discuss plans for United Nations reform and the implementation of the consensus reached at last year's summit. Member States will have the time and opportunity to engage in an in-depth exchange of views and to seek broad consensus on United Nations reform.

The Open-ended Working Group has served for many years as an effective platform for exchanges and discussions on Security Council reform, especially with regard to expansion. It should continue to play its important role in narrowing differences and increasing common understanding. China is willing to work with all others and actively supports the efforts of the President of the General Assembly to promote progress in Council reform and all other areas of United Nations reform.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): We have almost completed the entire reform process of the United Nations, but we still have before us a political issue that is both sensitive and of great significance: the reform of the Security Council.

The violations of international peace and security that we have witnessed in recent days, especially in the Middle East, should lead us to reflect on the urgent need to improve the working methods and legitimacy of the Security Council.

The veto comes once more to mind. As Argentina has said many times, the veto power and the other privileges of the permanent members not only infringe on the legal equality of States but also affect the effectiveness of the Council and the possibility to reach consensus when confronting conflicts such as those we are seeing today.

National interests of States must also accommodate global interests related to international peace and security, in the context of the legitimacy that can be granted only by international law. As sovereign States, we are obliged to be responsive to world public opinion and the international community when they call for peace and security.

Let us recall that our achievements in reform were based on discussion, on the search for comprehensive solutions and on consensus. For that, we needed a positive and flexible attitude. Not a single State, not even the most powerful, was able to obtain everything it wanted, and that is a fact that we must bear in mind during this debate. We can no longer approach Security Council reform with stubbornness and inflexibility. It is neither a zero sum game nor one of winners and losers. We need, inevitably, to reach compromise. We need to accept that intransigence has led us to paralysis in Security Council reform, and we are witnessing its consequences now.

We stress that this is not an issue to be put to vote. It is a fundamental change to an essential element of the Charter and of the Organization. As some other speakers have mentioned, we must begin a serious negotiation process and put an end to pressure, speeches and stubborn positions. We believe that the time for negotiation has arrived.

Once again, we repeat our position that increasing the permanent membership through a single definitive decision is an unfair solution, and it would be pointless to try to reach such a solution. We have a number of draft resolutions and ideas on the table. There are various possible ways to reach agreement and variations that would accommodate all of our interests. Why do we not initiate a dialogue that is both pragmatic and positive? We strongly believe that the proposal put forward by the Uniting for Consensus

group offers a possible way forward towards an understanding.

The sincere dialogue that I mentioned could take place within the Working Group or in any other informal setting. Perhaps we could also think about initiating it at the regional level. Most of the political problems that prevent us from moving forward lie in historical perceptions and geopolitical considerations in various regions.

With those considerations, my delegation wishes to reaffirm our support to you, Sir, in order to make progress in the reform of the Security Council.

Mr. Palous (Czech Republic): For more than 10 years, the United Nations has been engaged in attempts to adjust its Security Council to new geopolitical realities — and so far, to no avail. The core structure of the Council still reflects the situation of the end of the Second World War, some 60 years ago. Since then, not only have new Powers and important actors emerged, but the nature of the threats to international peace and security has considerably changed. Today's world is facing new threats, such as terrorism, in addition to the more traditional conflicts between States, which are of no lesser concern even if they seem to be less numerous.

To address those challenges effectively, the Security Council should become a more representative, transparent and efficient body. The reform and expansion of the Security Council is unavoidable, and the Czech Republic has been consistently working for change. We are aware that there have been many different opinions in that respect. However, we must all work together to ensure the better functioning and greater authority of the Council. The Czech Republic shares the majority view that the absence of reform not only undermines the ability of the Council to act but possibly also hampers progress in other areas of United Nations reform.

We believe that in selecting new permanent members of the Council, one should take into account the overall role the candidates play in world affairs, their political, economic or military strength and their readiness to participate in safeguarding international peace and security and assuming greater financial responsibility vis-à-vis the United Nations. In particular, we have been supporting, through the years, the aspirations of Germany and Japan for permanent seats in the Council, along with the allocation of other new permanent seats to Latin America, Asia and Africa. There is no doubt that new permanent members from among the developing countries will help to enhance the credibility of the Council.

Consistent with its long-term position on Security Council reform, the Czech Republic — one of the original sponsors of last year's draft resolution by the so-called Group of Four (G-4) — continues to support that approach. We believe that the G-4 proposal offers a realistic and viable model for the Council's expansion and the upgrade of its working methods, a model that still has the potential to win the required majority of Member States, if not support from them all.

Mr. Cordovez (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador firmly supports all attempts and initiatives for reform of the United Nations. In that spirit, we have participated for many years in all restructuring efforts that have taken place in the Organization.

Ecuador has not limited itself to supporting reform texts in resolutions of the General Assembly and other organs, but has also supported with conviction the very few amendments to the Charter that have been adopted in the past. I refer in particular to that which increased the number of Security Council members from 11 to 15 and which showed that when one truly wants to accomplish something, it is possible to do so. In addition, we supported the amendments with regard to the composition of the Economic and Social Council.

My country believes that Security Council reform, in order to grant the Council greater authority, efficiency and relevance in dealing with international problems, is the key to ensuring that the United Nations can, in today's world, play the role its founders designed for it and that Member States hope it will fulfil. We need to respond to public opinion that truly clamours for the Organization to respond effectively to the challenges that daily, and with increasing frequency, confront international peace and security. The Security Council should be the guardian and custodian of political stability in the world, the main vehicle for multilateral measures to resolve conflict and the main forum for consultation and debate to clarify and solve international confrontations and disputes.

So that the Security Council can do that more effectively, it is essential and urgent that its present

composition be changed, precisely to bring it up to date with the world. It is the lack of representativity that has most eroded the Council's authority and efficiency. We therefore applaud the initiative and the efforts that Brazil, Germany, India and Japan have been carrying out for some time in that context.

Ecuador has been a Security Council member twice. Between the first time, in the early 1960s, from 1960 to 1961, and the second time, in the early 1990s, from 1991 to 1992, 30 years passed. We were thus able to see the effects of the fact that, in a world that had substantively changed, the Council's composition did not reflect the new realities, the changing circumstances of international problems and the new challenges facing the international community. Another 15 years have passed since then, and the situation is the same.

For all of those reasons, we will support with enthusiasm and conviction any proposal that seeks to change the Security Council's composition to make it more representative. We also favour the adoption of measures to improve the Council's working methods to make its deliberations more transparent so that its inter-institutional relations can be more harmonious. We are participating in this debate with sincere zeal to help find the way. We will support any action aimed at reconciling the various positions on this issue so that, with the necessary effort and political will, we will find a formula for Security Council recomposition that satisfies everyone.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium has always taken an active part in the debates on Security Council reform. If we are doing that again today, it is because we believe, more than ever before, that the status quo is not an option. Furthermore, the lack of movement in this area is undermining the Council's authority. Expectations have been created — in particular during the 2005 summit — and failing to respond to them could needlessly give rise to misunderstandings.

If Belgium is asking for Council reform, it is not doing so for the simple pleasure of reforming, but out of concern, as I said, for the Council's authority. That authority is based on two key concepts: legitimacy and effectiveness.

With respect, first, to legitimacy, the world changes, and with it the centres of power. New actors rise; new regional Powers emerge. It is appropriate that the Security Council — which has the primary responsibility for world stability — should reflect this new geopolitical reality in its composition to a greater extent.

Turning next to effectiveness, let us make no mistake: what we can gain in legitimacy by expanding the Security Council membership we can lose in terms of effectiveness. Therefore, we must ensure that the scope and the nature of such expansion do not undermine the effectiveness in decision-making that characterizes the Council today.

As everyone knows, both aspects of Security Council reform — expansion and working methods — are closely linked and together determine the legitimacy and effectiveness that I just mentioned. Discussions of its working methods are under way within the Council itself, and we have just learned of their results with great interest. In addition, we have heard the excellent suggestions made by our colleagues in the group of five small nations.

At this point, I do not wish to get into the substance of the issue of working methods, except for one aspect: the right of the veto. Here too, Belgium asks for a nuanced approach. To say only that this right should be abolished is simplistic, as is the reverse. In those who possess it, this right engenders a commitment and a specific responsibility without which the Council would be weakened rather than strengthened. Maintaining the principle of the veto is one thing; specifying and adapting the modalities for its exercise are another. Belgium believes that we must take that approach in order to find the point of equilibrium that, here too, should reconcile legitimacy and effectiveness.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): There is no doubt that during the present session of the General Assembly, progress has been made in the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals, whose priorities were set out in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) adopted by our heads of State or Government last September. During this period, the Assembly has focused on various areas of United Nations reform. We have accomplished a number of achievements, particularly the creation of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Critical reform of the Secretariat has also begun. Other areas remain to be addressed, including the review of mandates, reform of the Economic and

Social Council, the definition of a counter-terrorism strategy, Security Council reform and the revitalization of the General Assembly.

In this statement, I should like to emphasize two critical issues: terrorism, one of the main challenges facing the international community; and Security Council reform.

The Secretary-General has submitted a report on a global counter-terrorism strategy (A/60/825). To complement the reactions of Member States following the report's publication, I must say that the description of terrorism contained in that report applies to many terrorist acts that have claimed thousands of innocent, civilian lives throughout the world. There is indeed an international network that finances, supports and executes terrorist acts. International efforts must therefore be undertaken to counteract terrorism wherever it occurs.

We must admit that Iraq has now become a major front in the war against terrorism. Whatever the causes of the terrorist acts being committed in Iraq, they are claiming innocent civilian lives. The magnitude of terrorism in Iraq cannot be justified in any way or by any argument.

There have been 5,815 victims and many thousands of injured over the last two months alone. The description of terrorism offered by our heads of State in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) applies to the kind of terrorism that we are witnessing now in Iraq. We therefore stress that terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and manifestations, whoever commits it, wherever it occurs and whatever its objectives.

With regard to Security Council reform, we must say at the outset that in September 2005, our heads of State declared that Security Council reform was needed as a first stage in the overall reform of the United Nations, with a view to making the Security Council more representative and transparent. The General Assembly has been considering this issue since 1993. Despite the progress in the discussion and the ideas that have since come forward with regard to the process of reform, no final decisions have been taken with regard to the implementation of those ideas. Doubtless, part of this failure is related to the fact that we have established a link between improving the Security Council's working methods and enlarging its membership. Negotiations reached an advanced stage in the latter part of 2005, and a number of draft resolutions were submitted to the General Assembly on the reform of the Security Council and, in particular, with regard to increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council.

Reform of the Security Council is without doubt an important element of the ongoing overall reform of the United Nations. We consider that improving the working methods of the Security Council will allow us to reach consensus on the enlargement of the Council. We attach particular importance to expanding the number of permanent and non-permanent seats so that the body becomes more representative and democratic without impinging on its efficiency and effectiveness. At the same time, however, we do need to improve the working methods of the Security Council, because this would have an impact on the interests of most if not all States Members of the United Nations, while increasing the number of permanent seats would affect the interests of only a limited number of States.

Over recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of public meetings of the Security Council and further participation in the debate by States not members of the Council when the discussion concerned their specific interests. We hope that Member States will also be enabled to take part in closed consultations of the Security Council, pursuant to article 31 of the Charter, to allow for transparency and openness in the Council's work.

It is also our hope that there will be an increased role for regional organizations. Most of the conflicts which threaten international peace and security are regional in nature, and a greater role should therefore be given to regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of conflicts, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter, provided that this does not impinge on the prerogatives and responsibilities of the Security Council with regard to international peace and security, and provided that respect for human rights is enhanced.

When we talk about improving the Council's working methods, we also need to consider the sanctions regimes and the use of the veto. The Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2) addressed the main aspects of sanctions regimes, stating that a balance needed to be struck between their effectiveness and their impact on civilian population. Sanctions should be implemented and monitored in an effective way and should be regularly reviewed. Sanctions

should only be applied for a limited period of time and account should be taken of their long-term impact on the targeted population.

The objective of sanctions is to ensure international peace and security without recourse to force and to rectify errors in the behaviour of regimes that the Security Council considers not to be respecting its resolutions. Sanctions are not aimed at destroying the social fabric of nations, nor are they a collective punishment of peoples or States. They are rather punishment directed at specific individuals and regimes.

We attach particular importance to the sanctions committees that have been established pursuant to resolutions of the Security Council, particularly resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1518 (2003). We believe that an improvement in the work of those sanctions committees could ensure the absence of collective punishment.

As regards the reform of the right of veto, we believe that work on cluster II issues should focus on improving the way the veto is used. Vetoes should be strictly limited to issues under Chapter VII of the Charter. The veto should not be used in cases of genocide or massive violations of human rights. We believe that a system of "indicative voting", before formal voting, whereby Council members could call for a public indication of positions on a proposed action, as proposed by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (see A/59/565, para. 257) is of interest here. It has previously been proposed that the right of veto should apply only if at least two permanent members exercise it. That too is an interesting idea which requires examination.

We hope that the United Nations will be an Organization capable of assuming its responsibilities in achieving the purposes for which it was set up. To ensure that the Organization does this, it must continue the process of comprehensive reform in the interest of all Member States. Reform should, in particular, create a balance among the principal organs of the United Nations, respecting the prerogatives and mandates of each and avoiding any overlap between them. Here we note that the Security Council has of late been impinging upon the General Assembly, which is, however, the more democratic and representative body.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoken in Arabic*): My delegation welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion of agenda items 117 and 120, which, respectively, concern the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters, and follow-up to the outcome of the September 2005 Millennium Summit.

The Security Council was established as a tool to avert global threats and to guarantee and maintain international peace and security. It is the only body in the United Nations system which can authorize the collective use of force. It should therefore be representative, responsible, effective, transparent and flexible. More important, it should be capable of adapting to the new challenges which the international community is facing and should better reflect present-day realities.

For this reason, the expansion of Security Council membership is imperative. The United Nations has spent nearly 13 years discussing changes in the Council. We stress that the Government of the State of Qatar sincerely supports all constructive efforts to reform and strengthen the institutions of the United Nations, because we are fully confident that there can be no genuine United Nations reform without reform of the Security Council.

Security Council reform is long overdue. With its present composition, the Council cannot reflect the political and geographical reality of our world, as it did in 1945. The number of United Nations Member States has risen from 51 in 1945 to 192 at present. That steady increase underlines the importance of transforming this very important body and making it more representative of today's world, through the increase and expansion of its permanent and non-permanent membership, particularly from among the ranks of the developing countries. That would increase the possibility for all Member States to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to fulfil their Charter commitments. It would be a fount of great determination and confidence on the part of all Member States, and it would be a first step towards completing the reform of the United Nations.

My Government, under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, would like to emphasize its support for the efforts of the President and of the Secretary-General to reform the Organization, with particular emphasis on the good work towards reform of the Security Council. In

calling for such reform, we believe that the main principles of the United Nations Charter remain as valid now as ever. In this context, in his statement at the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005, His Highness said:

> "Reform of the Security Council and expansion of its membership have become an integral part of activating and invigorating the role of the United Nations itself. We are, therefore, looking forward to more deliberations among the Member States concerning the Council's functioning and its relations with other bodies of the Organization, notably the Economic and Social Council" (*A/60/PV.4, p. 27*).

We need to make the United Nations more active and more effective. For the Security Council to be legitimate and representative, it must better reflect our contemporary world. It must guarantee the legitimate interests of developing countries, in addition to those of the major economic and political Powers. Enlargement of the Security Council must not undermine its effectiveness. The way to guarantee this is to restrict the use of the veto, or to abolish it.

In that respect, the failure to adopt a Security Council draft resolution a few days ago owing to the use of that procedure — a draft resolution aimed at halting the continuous attacks and other operations against Palestinian civilians in the Gaza Strip and in other parts of the occupied Palestinian territories, and the killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian residential areas and infrastructure by Israel, the occupying Power — has led to an unprecedented and unforgettable deterioration of the situation.

Here, we cannot fail to mention the flagrant attack on a brotherly country, Lebanon, the complete destruction of residential property and infrastructure and the increase in the number of civilian casualties. We urge Israel to halt this illegal aggression and to cease the bloodletting and inhumane attacks on Lebanese territory. The Security Council should not carry over this crisis from one meeting to the next but should consider the root causes of the problem and understand the importance of implementing Council resolutions to bring about a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. We would like to warn that the volatile situation in Lebanon can lead to a wider explosion in the whole area and can have an impact on all countries in the region.

We stress the importance of increasing the membership of the Council and of ensuring regional representation. We fully believe too that equal importance should be given to improving the Council's working methods, and we underline the importance of transparency in its work. We would hope that all parties concerned will take this into account, otherwise, any reform will be meaningless. This is a unique opportunity to effect positive reform — one that should not be missed due to narrow and inflexible interests.

The lowest-common-denominator approach adopted by some States will not achieve the goal to which we all aspire. Naturally, no solution can satisfy all Member States. A readiness to reach consensus on an integrated set of proposals is thus a necessity.

It is clear that promoting representation of developing countries as both permanent and non-permanent members should be a key objective of the reform, so that the Council can have a logical democratic balance. There should be equality among countries in terms of both sovereignty and geographical representation. The Council should comprise a mixture of representatives from all continents and all major cultures and civilizations.

We have spent nearly 13 years in continuous discussion about changing the composition of the Security Council. While, in fact, we all agree on the imperative of reforming that most important United Nations organ and of making it more representative in terms of contemporary political and geographical realities, we have not been able to reach consensus on how this should be done. We must recognize that the Organization is facing huge difficulties on this issue.

It is to be expected that it will be extremely hard to resolve this problem, but we must not give up in our efforts to reach wider agreement. We should not take inflexible positions, because the present global situation is not in our collective interest. The State of Qatar, for its part, is ready to show reasonable flexibility in the negotiations, based on good intentions, not narrow interests. We should approach this challenge in a clear, transparent and consultative manner enhancing and consolidating multilateralism so that all States, large and small, can demonstrate their determination. We must avoid a situation in which a few countries will set the agenda for all the others.

A reformed United Nations can take up its leading role as the Organization responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security and for overcoming the many challenges that humanity faces. The Security Council should be democratic, effective and accountable to all, with a commitment to multilateralism, so that it can face effectively all the increasingly complex international threats and challenges. The Council should respond to the common long-term interests of all Member States, with a view to consolidating all 192 Member States into a large family which can draw strength from unity.

The Council should take account of the interests of States and be equitable in all the resolutions it adopts under the United Nations Charter. Our only hope is, through our collective wisdom, to reform the Council in such a way that allows it better to fulfil its mandate in the future, thus promoting the international interests of all States Members of the United Nations.

Mr. Skinner-Klée (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are meeting once again to debate the question of Security Council reform. My delegation will be very brief and simply restate Guatemala's well-known position. We are convinced that no reform of the Security Council should be limited exclusively to the issue of membership, but should also include a review of its working methods and decision-making process. The transparency and effectiveness of the Security Council, as well as the participation of non-member countries in debates on issues of interest to them, are essential to the Council's legitimacy.

Guatemala is in favour of promoting the open and accessible functioning of the Security Council in order to ensure its greater transparency so as to ensure that, in the words of the Charter, it can act on behalf of the Member States and thus in the interests of the international community, with the valuable contributions of interested States.

We are therefore grateful for the initiatives undertaken by the representatives of Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein and Singapore with regard to the draft resolution on improving the Security Council's working methods. Guatemala welcomes that proposal with great interest and believes that such contributions enrich the dialogue between Member States and promote the eventual implementation of the outcome document of the 2005 Summit, which would in turn strengthen the organs of this Organization. We are pleased that the Security Council, as laid out in the note adopted yesterday, has adopted certain positions held by the group of five small nations, which is a step in the right direction.

We strongly support the idea of strengthening coordination of the work of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in order to guarantee continuity in the Organization's work to ensure the timely and effective maintenance and consolidation of peace, while preserving the responsibilities and competences of each United Nations organ, pursuant to the Charter.

We hope to see a more representative, transparent and balanced Security Council, and therefore believe that no reform would be complete without an increase in the number of its members. In that respect, we understand that the increase must be applied in both categories — permanent and non-permanent membership — thus ensuring the appropriate and necessary geographical distribution, including among developed and developing countries. We are favourably disposed to the aspirations of Germany, Brazil, India and Japan to be new permanent members of the Security Council. We also feel that the representation of Africa in that category is equally essential.

Finally, Guatemala reiterates its commitment to participating actively in future discussions on the question of Security Council reform. That goes hand in hand with our aspiration to be elected by the General Assembly for the first time as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and thus continue to contribute to the process of reforming its working methods.

Mr. Aspelund (Iceland): I would like to thank President Eliasson for convening this meeting on the very important issue of the reform of the Security Council. The high number of speakers proves that the issue of Security Council reform is still very much alive.

Iceland has repeatedly stated that an effective reform of the United Nations entails a comprehensive reform of the Security Council both in the expansion of its membership and in its working methods.

We have consistently supported calls for increased transparency in the work of the Security Council. Some substantive steps, such as more open briefings, meetings and debates, have been taken in

that regard, which we welcome. However, further measures are needed to improve the working methods of the Security Council. With that in mind, we welcome the draft resolution on improving the working methods of the Security Council submitted by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland, the so-called group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5).

We do, however, remain convinced that, for reform of the Security Council to be meaningful, an increase in the number of both the permanent and non-permanent members of the Council is necessary. The Council needs to be more representative and thus more legitimate, better mirroring today's geopolitical realities. We must remember that membership of the United Nations has increased nearly fourfold since 1945. However, the size and composition of the Security Council, particularly of its permanent membership, have remained more or less unchanged. We also have to ensure that smaller countries have a reasonable opportunity to take part.

Iceland was one of the sponsors of the so-called Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution introduced during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Iceland also fully supports the same draft resolution resubmitted by Brazil, Germany and India in the beginning of this year. At the same time, we think that the S-5 proposal and the working methods part of the G-4 proposal are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, we must continue to be engaged in serious negotiations on this matter. We believe it essential to use the current momentum and to take action soon.

Ms. Banks (New Zealand): May I first thank our co-chairs for a thorough process of outreach and consultations over the past months. Their task of furthering the debate on Security Council reform was one of the most difficult to be assigned. Today's meeting is a welcome opportunity to gauge and exchange views on proposals for Security Council reform. We should focus our efforts on those areas where concrete progress can be achieved to the benefit of the United Nations membership and system.

With that objective in mind, we shall comment only briefly on New Zealand's position on the expansion of Security Council membership and at more length on suggestions that have been circulated for changes to its working methods.

On the size and composition of the Security Council, New Zealand continues to be guided by the same principles that we have set out in our previous statements. We agree that Security Council reform is an element of the overall reform agenda, but as in other areas of reform, we cannot advance until there is sufficiently broad agreement to give validity to change.

For our part, New Zealand would prefer to see a Security Council which is more broadly representative, effective and transparent in the way it operates. We have not taken a position on how that might happen and we remain open minded to options that could emerge, but we do believe that any expansion of the Security Council must include Japan.

There does not yet appear to be any emerging consensus on changing the composition of the Security Council, but while that exploration continues, New Zealand sees scope for changes to working methods that would allow the Council to be more efficient and, at the same time, strengthen the relationship between Council members and non-members.

For that reason, we welcomed the proposals put forward by Switzerland, Singapore, Liechtenstein, Costa Rica and Jordan. We agree with their rationale that closer cooperation between the Security Council and the membership at large will help the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We do not need to be reminded, with so many serious issues currently occupying the Security Council, that the influence and credibility of the United Nations are enhanced when the wider membership has confidence in the decisions of the Council and a heightened sense of collective ownership of those decisions and of commitment to the obligations they carry.

We are pleased to have received as an official document the note from the President of the Security Council on efforts to enhance the efficiency and transparency of the Council's work. We appreciate the hard work that has been done by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under Japan's chairmanship.

The recommendations in the President's note are all useful, but there is need for more progress and more ambition. For example, there are five proposals put forward by the group of five small nations — the

"Small Five" (S-5) — that we would like to see taken up by the Security Council. I will list those briefly.

First, there should be regular and timely consultations between members and non-members of the Security Council, established as part of the Council's standard operating procedures.

Secondly, where decisions by the Security Council require implementation by all Member States, the Council should seek the views of the Member States and ensure that their ability to implement decisions is taken into account in the decision-making process.

Thirdly, the Security Council should explore ways to assess the extent to which its decisions have been implemented, including the establishment of lessons-learned groups tasked with analysing obstacles to implementation and reasons for non-implementation and suggesting mechanisms or measures on the basis of best practices.

A fourth S-5 proposal that we support is that the Security Council's subsidiary bodies should include in their work, on a case-by-case basis, non-members with strong interest and relevant expertise, and that Member States should be offered informal opportunities to provide substantive input to the work of the subsidiary bodies.

Finally, the Security Council should enhance consultations with troop-contributing countries and other States that are especially engaged in United Nations field operations, particularly when they involve risks for the deployed personnel.

Any progress on updating the Security Council's working methods to make them more accessible to the wider membership is to be welcomed. New Zealand sees the President's note as setting in place some important stepping stones. We hope that the debate today will give us a sense of urgency to take that work forward.

Mr. Nemuun (Mongolia): Few issues have proved to be as politically sensitive and hard to solve as the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. We all recall how a good part of the fifty-ninth session was dedicated to discussions, negotiations and deliberations on various formulas for Security Council reform, with numerous proposals, counter-proposals, arguments and counter-arguments having been presented and championed by different groups. At some point, it even led to expressions of concern on the part of many Member States that this sole issue was going to overshadow the overall negotiations in the run-up to the 2005 world summit. In retrospect, we now know that it did not.

In his recent letter dated 28 June 2006, President Jan Eliasson rightly pointed out the highlights of our efforts to implement the outcome document of the 2005 world summit, but one essential element was missing from the list of reforms that we were able to attain: Security Council reform. In fact, that issue has laid dormant for quite some time now, and we thank you, Sir, for holding this most timely debate. It surely will reinvigorate the interest of Member States and, given the sufficient time we had to reflect on this issue, it may well bring us closer to reaching a broad understanding on the way forward. The sheer number of speakers in today's debate is a testimony to its timeliness and significance.

Mongolia's position on the reform of the Security Council is well known. We believe that a reformed Security Council will be better equipped to counter the challenges of the new millennium, as its decisions would wield greater legitimacy due to its more effective, democratic, representative and accountable nature. Mongolia is of the view that the composition of the Security Council has ceased to reflect current world realities and changes in the membership of the Organization since the end of the Second World War, the collapse of the colonial system and the bipolar world order. Indeed, that sentiment is shared by the general membership of this Organization, as can be seen from the outcome document, which supports the early reform of the Security Council in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and legitimacy and the implementation of its decisions.

Apart from that laudable unity, Member States have different points of view on how to solve the current situation. At what pace should we move and, more fundamentally, what is the right way to reform the Security Council? I will deliberately not mention particular models of expansion that proliferated during the course of the deliberations last year.

The point of departure for Mongolia remains a just and equitable expansion of the Security Council in both its permanent and non-permanent categories of

membership, ensuring due representation of developing and developed countries alike.

As for the criteria for the selection of additional permanent members, we must, in our view, include equitable geographical distribution, the genuine commitment of the aspirant countries to the goals and objectives of the United Nations, and the capacity to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. In that respect, Mongolia continues to support Japan, Germany and India in what we see as their legitimate aspirations. Mongolia believes that Africa and Latin America have also to be duly represented on the Council.

Improving the working methods of the Security Council is an essential element of reform. The core of our efforts in that area should be to ensure that the Security Council is more mindful of the views of the general membership of the United Nations in the decisions it takes and that a more harmonious and mutually complementary and cooperative relationships exists between the Security Council and the General Assembly. The reform of the Security Council, and its enhanced legitimacy and effectiveness, should progress in parallel with, not to the detriment of, the increased authority and role of the General Assembly as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative body of the United Nations. In the same vein, Mongolia supports a so-called review clause to be included in any expansion scenario.

My delegation takes note of the steps taken by the Security Council on improving its working methods, particularly through the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, under the chairmanship of Japan, the results of which we are about to see. We also note with interest the proposal of the group of five small nations, contained in draft resolution A/60/L.49. Increased transparency in the Council's work, the increased involvement in its work of States not members, and its enhanced accountability to the membership are elements that will benefit all — first and foremost, the Council itself.

Many a lance was broken last year over the issue of the reform of the Security Council. It is now time to move on, past all differences and towards fresh ideas. Today's debate should not be a one-off exercise, but should rather be followed by wide-ranging consultations with a view to arriving at a solution that enjoys the widest possible understanding among Member States. My delegation stands ready to play an active part in such consultations.

Ms. Lintonen (Finland): The outcome document of the 2005 world summit highlights the central role of Security Council reform. It also underlines the fact that this reform contains two elements — the enlargement of the membership of the Security Council and the improvement of its working methods — that are of equal importance. I thank you, Sir, for this opportunity to discuss the reform.

Finland, in its national capacity, strongly supports the reform and enlargement of the Security Council. We must take every opportunity to make the United Nations more efficient, transparent and more reflective of the aspirations of its entire membership. The reform of the Security Council is an important part in that process. We must make sure that that the Council is truly effective in carrying out its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

For most countries, membership in the Security Council is a rare and limited opportunity. However, all United Nations Member States are required to implement the Security Council's decisions and are directly affected by the actions of the Council. Therefore, closer cooperation between the Security Council and the membership at large is essential.

Finland supports the enlargement of the Council in the number of permanent and non-permanent members alike so that the Council can represent the political realities of the twenty-first century. However, if the Security Council is to be both effective and legitimate, the right of veto should not be extended to the new permanent members under any circumstances.

Finland also strongly supports reform of the Council's working methods so as to make it more transparent, inclusive and legitimate. In that respect, we warmly welcome the note by the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions that was adopted by the Security Council yesterday. That document lists the recent practices and newly agreed measures of the Security Council and is a good practical step in enhancing the transparency and openness of the Security Council's working methods.

Mr. Hill (Australia): We are grateful for this opportunity to discuss another element of the critically important United Nations reform project. Members will

be familiar with Australia's work for United Nations reform. Both nationally and as a member of the Canada-Australia-New Zealand group, we have actively engaged to find ways to make the United Nations more effective, efficient and accountable, and that is the prism through which we view Security Council reform.

We were disappointed that the United Nations summit process in 2005 did not arrive at an acceptable outcome on Security Council reform. That was, in our view, a missed opportunity. However, it was not the end of the road and, along with many other States, Australia remains engaged with the process of Security Council reform.

Australia has been a supporter of appropriate reform of the Security Council for a long time. The world has changed a great deal in the past 61 years, and we need to ensure that the United Nations security structures accurately reflect the impact of those changes.

A more representative Council needs to be balanced against the ongoing need for the Council to effectively discharge its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. The ability of the Security Council to act resolutely, decisively and quickly are paramount. Its responsibility for collective security places upon it the highest expectations of the international community, and it should not be enlarged so far as to make it unwieldy or unable to make consensus decisions. The creation of a small number of new permanent and non-permanent positions on the Security Council seems to us to be an appropriate way to achieve that balance.

Australia considers the claims of Japan and India to be clear. Both make major contributions to the United Nations system, either in financial contributions, peacekeeping commitments or through a history of consistent and active engagement with the Organization. Australia also continues to support Brazil and appropriate African representation. Australia has consistently opposed the extension of veto rights to any new members.

Reform of the Security Council's membership goes hand in hand with reform of the Council's working methods. The workload of the Council appears to increase in intensity and volume each year and it makes sense to review its mechanisms. To that end, we are grateful for the proposals from the group of five small nations on working methods reform. We also note the work of Ambassador Oshima and his colleagues in the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. A number of the ideas produced in those forums may ultimately improve the effectiveness of the Council.

We should sound a note of caution that, in working towards appropriate processes for the Security Council, again we must not jeopardize the Council's capacity to act in accordance with its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, as outlined in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter. That criterion should be applied to any proposed reforms to the Council's working methods.

We thank you, Sir, for convening this useful discussion and look forward to further discussions on United Nations reform issues in coming months.

Mr. Duclos (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I thank you, Sir, for having organized this meeting, which comes at an especially timely moment. I know that that is a hallowed cliché at the United Nations, but it is relevant on this occasion.

Why is this the right time? There are three reasons for that. First, we began serious discussion of Security Council reform two years ago. In September, it will be a year since our heads of State and Government met in summit and committed themselves to proceeding with reform. Secondly, United Nations reform is now well under way, yet everyone knows that there can be no true reform of our Organization without Security Council reform. Thirdly, our thinking has matured and time has passed. I have noted a greater resolve, reflected in various statements, to reach an outcome, and positions are less heated than they once were. That is why we feel that the time has come to take great strides towards reaching a solution.

What solutions are available? Many options have been considered in recent months and we have participated actively in all discussions, which have only strengthened our opinions on three parameters.

The first is that the enlargement should involve the permanent and non-permanent categories of membership. That is a precondition for achieving broad consensus. The second parameter is that we are more convinced than ever before in our support for Germany,

Brazil, India and Japan becoming permanent members of the Security Council. The third parameter is to ensure that the African continent plays its full role in a reformed Security Council.

Reform of Security Council membership is not aimed at satisfying any one party. It is in the interest of us all because it will enhance the Council's authority. In the same vein, it is important that progress also be made with regard to reform of the Council's working methods. My country welcomes the set of proposals submitted on behalf of the Security Council by the Ambassador of Japan. The measures adopted represent an important step forward in terms of inclusiveness and transparency. Here again, this is not a question of satisfying one party or another. Rather, it is quite simply an issue of improving the Security Council's effectiveness.

With regard to those two tracks, France will continue to strive most energetically for results.

Mr. Towpik (Poland): The issue of Security Council reform has been on the agenda of the United Nations for a dozen years or so. Unfortunately, and despite all our efforts, a solution has not yet been found.

We hope, however, that this debate will be a significant step towards such a solution and we think that the conditions for finding a solution seem to be better now than they were before, for several reasons.

First, efforts to reform the United Nations have intensified over the past year. They have yielded some important results, even though our expectations had been higher and more ambitious. In the light of those achievements, our inability to progress on such a crucial issue as Security Council reform looks like a serious failure. What is more, in the public perception, Security Council reform is viewed as a test of the ability of the United Nations to adapt to new realities.

Secondly, the discussion on Security Council reform has become deeper and more mature. Several drafts of the solution have been presented. Their advantages and disadvantages have been extensively considered. The discussion has also become more comprehensive. It has covered not only the expansion of the membership of the Security Council, but also possible changes in its working methods. Those changes are intended not only to improve the work of the Security Council, but also to expand the involvement in its work of non-members of the Council and regional organizations. They also aim at increasing the transparency of the work of the Council and enhancing its effectiveness.

The two processes — one of Security Council expansion, and the other of improving and developing the methods of work of the Security Council — even if dealt with on separate tracks, are mutually complementary. They can help us to find a solution to each and to move forward the reform of the Security Council as a whole.

In that context, we welcome the results of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions. We also note with appreciation the work and the draft of the so-called group of five small nations. Their ideas and proposals undoubtedly inspired the discussions of the Working Group and remain an important guideline for further endeavours in that domain.

Thirdly and finally, in April we held a good and useful session of the Open-Ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters Related to the Security Council. The session was preceded by a series of bilateral consultations conducted by Ambassador Bethel and Ambassador Majoor. The report on those consultations, discussion during the session, as well as the summary of the discussion provided all of us with comprehensive and valuable insight into what the Member States feel and what possible solutions could look like.

Thus, let me repeat: We resume our debate in new and, I believe, more favourable circumstances. But can we find a solution? In that spirit, I would like to offer a few comments on how my delegation sees the purpose of the present debate and possible solutions.

First, we see this debate as the resumption of the dialogue on this difficult but unavoidable and important part of United Nations reform. We hope that this dialogue is resumed in good will and with the determination to find an acceptable solution.

Secondly, we believe that the overhaul of the Security Council should cover both its composition and working methods and that the review of the membership should include both its permanent and non-permanent membership categories.

Thirdly, in approaching the category of permanent membership, we should first of all follow the philosophy of the United Nations Charter in that respect concerning the reflection in the Security Council of existing realities of power. The presence in the Council and the cooperation of the world's main actors is not only desirable but necessary if the Council is to discharge its responsibilities effectively. In that context, we have declared our support for the aspirations of those countries that make and are able to make a particularly important contribution to the United Nations system, and we maintain that support. At the same time, we believe that a larger number of permanent members of the Council should reflect the broader membership of the United Nations and representation for all regions. That is a question of both the effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council's actions.

Fourthly, the broader membership of the entire United Nations and equitable geographic distribution should be the basic guidelines in the enlargement of the category of non-permanent members of the Security Council. In this context, let me just echo what the Chairman of the Eastern European Group, the representative of Armenia, said this morning: the enlargement of the non-permanent category must include an additional seat for the Eastern European region, which has doubled its membership during the last few years.

Fifthly, we take note of the discussion on the veto power of new permanent members, having frequently expressed critical views on this issue. Our understanding is that the idea of non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members seems to be widely accepted and should be incorporated into a future solution.

Sixthly, and similarly, a proposal to review in 15 years any solution which can be worked out now has already found broad approval. The commitment to such a review ensures that we will not create a kind of eternal structure and that, to the contrary, we will envisage the possible changes of circumstances and the possible adaptations of today's decision to future and unpredictable developments. Non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members is a guarantee that we will not create new obstacles in the way of such adaptations.

Finally, reflecting on possible changes in the composition of the Security Council, we should take into account changes already agreed and possible further changes in the working methods of that body. Such changes should lead to closer cooperation by the members of the Security Council with non-members and regional organizations, to greater transparency in the Council's activities and, in the end, to greater accountability for Security Council members and greater inclusiveness for non-members in the work of that body.

Allow me to conclude with the following observations. We strongly believe that, while we are dealing with these old problems, we are at a new and more promising stage of the debate. Progress is the reform of the United Nations as a whole requires making additional and urgent efforts aimed at the reform of the Security Council. We have not yet overcome all of our difficulties, but I would say that a kind of middle ground in our thinking about the problem is gradually expanding. We have broad agreement, if not consensus, that the current composition of the Security Council does not reflect present realities and should be more representative. We also agree that we should increase the involvement in that most important decision-making body of those who contribute most to the United Nations.

New ideas have emerged, such as the non-extension of the veto power to new permanent members and the commitment to reviewing in the future solutions which are worked out today. Some new ideas have also emerged in today's debate.

Changes in the working methods of the Security Council also facilitate our overcoming some of the issues that we are facing in the debate. All of that, I believe, allows us to take another step forward.

Mr. Menon (Singapore): Despite perceptions to the contrary, we witnessed a number of significant United Nations reforms this year. The Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and the Central Emergency Response Fund were established. A whistle-blower protection system and an ethics office have been initiated. Resolutions on development and management and Secretariat reform have been adopted.

There has, however, been one exception. We have seen little real movement in Security Council reform, either on the question of enlargement or on that of

working methods. I will deal with those questions sequentially.

Singapore supports enlargement of the Security Council to better reflect current geopolitical realities. Today's world is different from that of 1945, yet the Security Council remains essentially unchanged. If consensus is reached on enlarging the Security Council, we would support expansion in both permanent and non-permanent seats as part of a comprehensive Security Council reform, including working methods.

In that regard, my delegation would like to reiterate our support for the previous Group of Four (G-4) draft resolution (A/59/L.64) on the Council's extension, except on the question of the veto. We know that three of the G4 countries and the African Union have resubmitted their proposals on the issue, and we hope to see some progress in the near future.

While on the subject of Security Council enlargement, allow me to reiterate my delegation's views on the use of the veto and the idea of establishing semi-permanent seats. The right of the veto was born of a different era. It was a privilege and a safety valve conferred on the five victorious Powers from the Second World War to secure their participation in the United Nations. The situation today is different. Singapore opposes granting the veto to any new permanent members. Extending the veto will complicate decision-making in the Council and will undermine the credibility of the United Nations. Paralysis comes to mind, and I suspect that that would encourage the major Powers to bypass the Security Council to the detriment of us all.

That said, we recognize that the five permanent members will not give up the right to the veto. That is the reality that we have to accept. But we should not add to the problem by further complicating Security Council decision-making.

We also have strong reservations regarding any notion of semi-permanent seats. We would allow medium Powers to seek election both to the renewable seats, whatever their length of term, and to the existing two-year non-renewable seats. In practice, that would result in the exclusion of small States from the Security Council. That is unfair. Even if we were able to make it possible for all Member States to compete for both categories of non-permanent seats, the net result would be similar. I repeat that that is unfair to half of the approximately 100 small States that have never served in the Security Council. We cannot support proposals that exclude small countries or make it difficult for them to serve in key organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council. Such exclusiveness would do nothing to improve the legitimacy or representativeness of the Security Council.

Enlargement is not the only issue. An equally important issue is the reform of the Security Council's working methods. If our aim is to make the Security Council more effective, we need comprehensive reform that includes working methods. I might add that enlargement and working methods should be pursued on parallel tracks and not be held hostage by each other.

Working-methods reform is about ensuring that the Security Council is transparent and inclusive in its decision-making. It is about ensuring that the Council's decisions have buy-in from stakeholders, thus making its positions more legitimate and effective. Regrettably, the Security Council remains opaque, leading many to question its decisions.

We happen to know that the Council is trying to address the issue of its working methods through its Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions chaired by Japan. We would like to see this initiative continue but, while the current effort is commendable, it does not do enough to cover aspects dealing with interactions between the Security Council and non-members of the Council.

It is in that context that Singapore, Liechtenstein, Jordan, Switzerland and Costa Rica — the group of five small nations (S-5) — have put forward a draft resolution (A/60/L.49) on improving the working methods of the Security Council. While we are all familiar with the details, let me elaborate on the rationale.

The S-5 proposals do not seek to undermine the powers and prerogatives of the Security Council. The S-5 draft resolution does not advocate abandoning the current system. Rather, the draft resolution has taken on board suggestions that we have been discussing for years in various forums, including the Open-ending Working Group on Security Council reform. It has packaged many of these suggestions as improvements to the Council's working methods to increase the Council's effectiveness and legitimacy.

The S-5 proposals are also in line with Article 10 of the Charter, which states that the General Assembly has the authority to discuss any questions or any matters within the scope of the Charter or relating to functions of any organs of the United Nations and to make recommendations to the United Nations Members or to the Security Council. We believe that if the Council can be made more transparent and communicative, this could increase the buy-in and support for Council decisions on the part of all Member States.

I hope that delegations will respond positively to the S-5 suggestions for improving the working methods of the Security Council. We believe that our suggestions will increase and accountability of the Security Council and contribute to a strengthened and more effective United Nations.

Mr. De Palacio España (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, on behalf of my delegation, I would like to express our appreciation for this opportunity to once again debate the issue of the reform and working methods of the Security Council, giving it the time it deserves. This is a subject about which there are still major differences between Member States. We must therefore discuss it as calmly as possible and while endeavouring to establish a new perspective that allows for more substantive progress than has been made thus far.

My delegation has clearly expressed its preference for a reform of the Council based on the broadest possible agreement among all Member States. We believe that we should open up the full range of possibilities to provide representation for all, without increasing or consolidating inequalities. Spain, along with a significant number of other States, has therefore promoted the creation of 10 new elected, non-permanent seats. That would make the Security Council more democratic and provide for periodic accountability to all the Member States represented in the General Assembly. As we have often said, it would also serve to strengthen the legitimacy, credibility and effectiveness of the Security Council's actions on behalf of the entire international community.

All regional groups should benefit from the creation of new elected non-permanent seats. The distribution of seats should allow for better rotation in the Council's membership, especially for medium-sized and small States. We also believe that regional groups should be able to decide on mechanisms governing rotation and the possible re-election of their members, so as to allow for greater democracy and transparency and to ensure that the interests of each subregion are taken into account. That regional component should be very useful in strengthening the principle of representativity. Elections should nevertheless continue to take place in the General Assembly, as set out in the Charter.

An increase in the number of Security Council members would not be complete if it did not go hand in hand with the reform of the Council's working methods. My delegation in particular calls for greater participation by non-member States in Council debates. In that regard, I would like to say that we have a positive view of draft resolution A/60/L.49, regarding the Council's working methods, which was introduced under agenda item 120 by the delegations of Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. In order that it may be effectively implemented in the future, we hope that the draft resolution will be the object of general consensus, including the members of the Security Council. In that connection, I would also like to point to the work done by the delegation of Japan and the other members of the Security Council in addressing the issue of reforming the Council's working methods. We believe that to be a positive step.

A hasty decision on Security Council reform that does not include the necessary broad agreement may never go into force. That would run counter to the legitimate aspirations of the vast majority of States, which favour an expansion that provides the requisite opportunities for all through democratic elections in the General Assembly, which is the plenary and supreme organ of the Organization.

Already months have passed since the General Assembly took stock of the status of Security Council reform initiatives in the relevant Working Group. In that period, it has proven impossible to reach any agreement that would make it possible to adopt a model for Security Council reform that would be generally acceptable to the General Assembly. We were pleased that some of the current reform proposals were ultimately not put to the vote in the General Assembly, for nothing would have been more inappropriate, given that none of the proposals has sufficient support at the moment.

The movement in which Spain is active, Uniting for Consensus, believes that it is only by carrying out negotiations on the various proposals that have been made that it will be possible to reach a potential agreement. Maximalist positions calling for a reform of the Security Council in which differences between the various members would be accentuated in terms of the permanence of their membership have been proved not to have the necessary support from the vast majority of delegations. The time has come to abandon positions that seek privilege and to begin a negotiating process that is serious, rigorous, open and participatory, so as to reach a compromise solution based on the various proposals.

Only such a process of negotiations will allow us to make progress in the very necessary reform of the Security Council. The sooner we accept that any exclusionary option has no future, the sooner we will be able to focus our energy on drafting a representative, equitable and democratic formula for the very badly needed expansion in the number of members in the Security Council.

Mr. Badji (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is once again addressing the important issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. Today's two meetings are all the more crucial given the significant progress made following the summit in September 2005 — notably, the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. Member States must now ensure, in a spirit of unity and openness, that significant progress is made by the launching the much-awaited reform of the Security Council.

In that regard, His Excellency Mr. Youcef Yousfi, Permanent Representative of Algeria and Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of July, has very clearly and eloquently set forth the common African position. The delegation of Senegal fully endorses his statement.

The rationale favouring the taking into account of the African position is based on the sad fact of the injustice that Africa has suffered. This is a continent that, despite its massive and active participation in the life of the United Nations and the fact that it includes 53 Member States, has been unjustly deprived of permanent representation in the Security Council. That situation, which has already been denounced in the Assembly by His Excellency President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, is all the more intolerable and paradoxical given that, according to generally accepted statistics, almost 70 per cent of the issues dealt with by the Security Council concern African problems.

As is clearly evident in the Ezulwini Consensus, whose main elements were reaffirmed by the Sirte African Declaration and by the most recent African Union summit, held on 1 and 2 July 2006 at Banjul, the Gambia, this is a historical anomaly that must be corrected as soon as possible, within the framework of a fair and equitable expansion of membership that would give Africa two permanent seats, with the same privileges and prerogatives as the current permanent members, and five non-permanent seats. The African States themselves must be entrusted with allocating those seats and defining the criteria therefor.

My country, Senegal, believes that, above and beyond the restructuring of the Security Council, the working methods of that important organ should be improved considerably, particularly with a view to ensuring greater transparency in its work and also greater responsibility on the part of its members vis-à-vis the entire membership of the United Nations and the international community. At stake here are the credibility and effectiveness of both the Security Council and our universal Organization.

Security Council reform can be achieved if we have the political will, embrace innovation and act with determination. I can assure the General Assembly that the Senegalese delegation will provide all necessary support to ensure that we have a renewed Security Council that is more democratic, more transparent and better prepared to meet the urgent challenges of today's world.

Nana Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, let me thank President Eliasson for having organized this debate. Today we have yet another opportunity to revive the momentum for reforming the Security Council, in accordance with the decision of our world leaders and the wishes of millions of people around the globe. Only a modernized, dynamic and fully democratic United Nations can best guarantee a safe and secure world for all of humanity.

The outcome document of the September 2005 world summit clearly recognized that reform of the Security Council was central to the overall effort to reform the United Nations in order to make it more

broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions.

A truly reformed Security Council must reflect the democratic values of our times. Its membership must be expanded and its working methods updated, so that this very important organ can achieve higher standards of representation, transparency and accountability.

Member States have successfully implemented the decision that required the setting up of a Human Rights Council and a Peacebuilding Commission. The two bodies are now fully operational. Determined efforts are being made to reform the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The spotlight is now on the Security Council. It is our belief that, given the same commitment and political will, significant progress could be achieved in reforming the Security Council, in line with the letter and spirit of the outcome document.

Ghana subscribes to the African Common Position articulated earlier by the Chairman of the African Group for July, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Algeria. We believe that Africa must be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, not least the Security Council. Obviously, we have a vested interest in that organ, which, under the United Nations Charter, has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

My delegation therefore reiterates the call for Africa to be allotted at least two permanent seats on the Security Council, with all the prerogatives and privileges of permanent membership, including the right of veto, as long as the veto continues to exist. This would be in addition to the five non-permanent seats that we seek on an expanded Security Council. Africa could thereby enhance its contribution to the new world order of lasting peace and security to which we all aspire.

We are happy to note that considerable progress has also been achieved in the search for ways of improving the working methods of the Security Council. My delegation takes this opportunity to congratulate the Chairman of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, Ambassador Kenzo Oshima of Japan, and his team for the excellent work that they have done. The Group's report contains a wealth of very practical and useful proposals. Ultimately, increased transparency, broader representation and participation, as well as easier access, will enhance the Council's authority and legitimacy in the eyes of the wider public. The democracy that we have all been preaching, or which has been preached to us, in domestic affairs should also be practiced on the international plane.

In an era of democratic governance, it is becoming increasingly difficult to defend a system whereby a minority of five of the 192 Member States that make up the United Nations have special powers and privileges and are permanently at the core of our global security system. The system is dysfunctional in that any one of the five, if it so chooses, can paralyse action by the most important organ of our collective security system.

We share the view so well articulated by Paul Kennedy in his latest book, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present and Future of the United Nations*, that the 1945 peace settlement — and by inference the United Nations — was the first post-war order that, in an unprecedented manner, gave veto privileges to a pentarchy of nations indefinitely. But, as he aptly notes,

> "the ever-changing nature of the international political system — in a word, the rise and fall of Great Powers — cannot be frozen or halted by a mere contract."

The world is moving on, and we should change with the times. The desire for change has permeated the entire Organization, and the momentum exists as well for altering the status quo. Let us muster the political will and the courage to carry the reforms to their logical conclusion. Towards that end, my delegation would like to reiterate its unswerving commitment to the pursuit of a comprehensive reform of the Security Council, in order to free it, energize it and make it more responsive to the challenges of contemporary times and the years ahead.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): We welcome today's debate. The United Kingdom remains a strong advocate of Security Council reform, including expansion. The Council remains, and needs to remain, an efficient and effective body able to tackle the many modern challenges of international peace and security.

We welcome what has been achieved in the United Nations this year in other areas, including the Peacebuilding Commission, management reform, the development resolution and mandate review. I should like to pay tribute to all those who led those efforts. But, as the representative of Ghana said, the spotlight now is on the Council. The United Kingdom is disappointed that the debate on Council expansion has remained stalled for too long. We want to see a Council that is fully representative of the modern world and of today's United Nations.

That is why the United Kingdom remains strongly supportive of permanent seats for Japan, Germany, Brazil and India on an enlarged Security Council. We support permanent representation for Africa, and we want to see more non-permanent seats, so that the entire membership of the United Nations has more frequent opportunities to serve on the Council and to contribute positively to the Council's work. In that regard, we endorse what previous speakers have said about the importance of small States being on the Council.

The challenges of peace and security do not go away. We saw that today in the Secretary-General's briefing to the Security Council on Lebanon. The Council has also dealt recently with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and will soon be considering Iran. The Peacebuilding Commission, which is a new body, has brought together certain aspects of the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly by dealing with development and post-conflict issues. As other speakers have said, it deserves our full support.

We hope that the United Nations can rise to the challenge of finding a way through the current impasse with respect to the Security Council. Fresh thinking is required. That is why British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his speech at Georgetown University in May, called for renewed momentum in the debate on Council reform. We hope very much that today's discussions will contribute to that.

Expansion is important, but reform is not just about expansion. We have long supported attempts to review how the Security Council operates, in order to strengthen its effectiveness, enhance its efficiency, improve its transparency and expand its interaction with others. We all agreed in the summit outcome document (resolution 60/1) that it was for the Council to do that.

The United Kingdom is therefore delighted that the Security Council's Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, skilfully chaired by the Permanent Representative of Japan, produced a wide range of tangible proposals to improve the working methods of the Security Council. The United Kingdom has been an energetic participant in this process. We believe that the outcomes, which — as the Japanese delegation has indicated — were endorsed yesterday by the Council, will help the Council to work even better and will ensure that communication between the Council and the wider membership represented in the Assembly remains active and beneficial and continues to develop. The United Kingdom looks forward to working closely with Council partners to ensure that these outcomes are implemented in practice.

We note the comments from the group of five small nations — Switzerland, Costa Rica, Jordan, Singapore and Liechtenstein — and others on the need for Security Council reform. We share a common objective. The United Kingdom also believes that it is right that all members of the United Nations express their views and input positively into the reform debate. Security Council reform has a bearing on all United Nations Member States. A more effective Council is in all our interests.

Mr. Piperkov (Bulgaria): Bulgaria associates itself with the statement to be made by the Permanent Representative of Romania, Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States. We would now like to outline our views on some specific aspects of the issue at hand.

Bulgaria believes that reform of the Security Council is part of the overall efforts made by the international community to promote positive change and transformation of the United Nations in conformity with the new economic and political realities. We are firmly committed to the reform process and agree with the notion that any reform will remain inconclusive unless it addresses the issue of improving the body that stands at the core of the United Nations mission to maintain international peace and security.

Bulgaria is of the view that reform should be dealt with in a way that will help reinforce the representative character, effectiveness, legitimacy and transparency of the Council's activities. On the issue of

enlargement, we strongly support an eventual decision that will further increase the effectiveness of the Security Council and will strengthen its capacity to maintain international peace and security. In that regard, we welcome the common understanding that seemed to have emerged during our previous debates on expansion as an essential part of the overall strategy to achieve a reformed and credible Security Council, even though opposing approaches remain.

The debate on Security Council reform consumed much energy and time during 2005, with no apparent substantive result. Regrettably, so far we have not been able to fully meet the challenge and to arrive at a solution on the issue of expansion. We share the disappointment prevailing among Member States in that regard, although we do not believe that our efforts have been in vain. In fact, we have had a productive and useful exchange of views both in the General Assembly and in its Open-ended Working Group, as well as in the regional groups and among like-minded countries. Let me assure the Assembly of Bulgaria's willingness to cooperate further in considering any initiative that might be helpful in stimulating consensual ideas on the reform process as a whole and on Security Council reform in particular.

My delegation is confident that, in the context of the new realities, some countries will be able to successfully perform the duties and responsibilities stemming from permanent membership owing to their increased economic and political potential and their widely acknowledged international role. We share the concern expressed recently by the Secretary-General, at the opening of the United Nations campus in Bonn, that it is no longer acceptable that major countries and major international Powers are not at the table. He further specified that, in fact, "these are the Powers we turn to when we have problems in regions". Similarly, the increase in the overall number of Member States in recent decades — including those belonging to the Eastern European Group — points strongly to the need for expansion in the non-permanent category as well.

In reference to the non-permanent category, we support enlargement that would ensure maintenance of the balance between the permanent and non-permanent members as well as the equitable distribution of seats among the regional groups. Furthermore, with due respect to various concepts and concrete ideas, we can support only a formula that takes into account the legitimate and justified aspiration of the Group of Eastern European States — whose membership has doubled over the past decade — to an additional seat in the non-permanent category.

Bulgaria has always been a staunch supporter of improving the working methods of the Security Council. We recognize the high value of the initiative of the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5) — and the recently adopted note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) concerning improvement of the Council's working methods. The ideas set out therein could be mutually complementary and could become meaningful steps in the right direction.

We are convinced that, given the regional character of most of the issues on the Security Council's agenda, the effectiveness of the Council's activities will increase substantively if the views of the regional and concerned States, as well as those of regional organizations, are duly taken into consideration in the decision-making process involving regional issues. We believe that procedures should be further developed to allow for their participation in the Council's consultations.

In concluding, let me assure the President once again of my delegation's full cooperation and support.

Mr. Kirn (Slovenia): At the 2005 world summit, heads of State or Government expressed support for early reform of the Security Council as an essential part of overall United Nations reform, and they committed themselves to strive to reach a decision to that end.

The debate we had in November 2005 reconfirmed the widely shared agreement that there is a need to expand the Security Council, in order to make it broadly representative and more efficient. The debate also showed that views remain diverse as to the appropriate size of the Council and categories of its expanded membership. Indeed, many delegations, including my own, had hoped for some results to be achieved by the end of 2005. Unfortunately, no progress has been made on this issue.

For many years we have discussed the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. On the eve of the 2005 world summit, these discussions gained additional political impetus and yet they have not resulted in any significant decision. We see no other

way but to continue our discussions in a search for the widest possible agreement on this issue. Not only does this remain a compelling task for us; it is also widely accepted that no United Nations reform can be completed without Security Council reform. Therefore, we should bring this issue to the attention of our leaders at the general debate of the Sixty-first General Assembly session, not because we lack policy vision, but, rather, because we need more political will for change.

Security Council reform must be comprehensive, and it must include both enlargement and working methods. In terms of membership and composition, the Security Council does not reflect the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. Any reform of the United Nations which fails to reflect these new realities would be incomplete, and the Security Council would run the risk of losing some of its legitimacy and authority.

Slovenia supports the enlargement of the Security Council in both categories, permanent and non-permanent. We continue to believe that that is the only appropriate way for the Security Council to achieve broader representation by including countries that have the most responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and to ensure the adequate and equitable geographic representation of all regional groups, including the Eastern European Group, whose membership in the United Nations has doubled in recent years. Slovenia therefore supports an enlargement of the Security Council that includes an additional seat for the Eastern European Group in the category of non-permanent members.

Working methods of the Security Council are equally important. Regardless of the size of the enlarged Security Council, we need to adapt its working methods so as to increase the involvement of the wider United Nations membership in its work, and thus to ensure greater transparency in its work.

We believe that improved working methods are necessary to better enable the United Nations, including the Security Council, to collectively address today's threats and challenges in a globalized world. For that reason, Slovenia supports draft resolution A/60/L.49, on improving the working methods of the Security Council, presented by Costa Rica, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Singapore and Switzerland. We see the draft resolution as an important contribution to the transparency, inclusiveness and accountability of the Council's work.

Mr. Muñoz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile has been an active promoter of an in-depth reform of the United Nations which, in reaffirming the principles and values of the Charter, will increase its credibility and legitimacy. We have already taken important steps in that direction, but we should not set aside the challenge of reforming the Security Council. For Chile, Security Council reform is a very important element within the overall United Nations reform process.

Our country seeks a renewal of the Security Council that will give it greater representativeness, transparency and effectiveness. We endorse the idea of enlarging the Council in the categories of both permanent and non-permanent members. But this should go hand in hand both with a review and improvement of the Council's working methods, as well as with a new way of understanding the rights and obligations of its members. Chile supports bringing in new permanent members without the right of veto. That goes together with the essential value that we give to the principle of equality before the law of States and the democratization of international bodies.

Since the creation of the United Nations and through the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform, my country has maintained that consistent position against the veto. Although the total elimination of the veto seems a far-off or unrealistic goal, we have not given up on seriously considering interim formulas, for example, restricting the use of the veto to Chapter-VII issues and, in such instances, excluding cases of genocide or crimes against humanity.

In parallel, we value those initiatives which seek to improve the Council's working methods. We believe that improving the working methods of the Security Council can generate greater levels of transparency and effectiveness. For this reason, we have joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/60/L.49, introduced by the group of five small nations — the "Small Five" (S-5).

Chile will continue to support the aspirations of friendly countries seeking permanent seats, as is the case, for our region, of Brazil. We will continue to work to build consensus on this subject and on the necessary comprehensive and successful reform of the Organization.

The President of the Assembly and the Vice-Chairs of the Working Group can count on our cooperation through this process.

Mr. Berruga (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before I address the item before us, my delegation would like to express the deep concern of the Government of Mexico regarding the serious events that are occurring in the Middle East. In this context, we would like to state our sorrow at the numerous civilian victims and renew Mexico's wish for progress towards a just and lasting solution to the conflicts afflicting that region.

It is interesting and illustrative to see the contrast between our debates here in the General Assembly and what is happening in the state of discussion within the Security Council.

Mexico is participating in these consultations with the resolute purpose of pushing for a substantive reform of the Security Council, a reform that will enable that organ to operate with the legitimacy and effectiveness that the very complex contemporary world demands, a reform that will update the composition and working methods of the Council so that it can attend to the new and old threats that endanger international peace and security.

Security Council reform has been discussed for more than a decade. In that period of time, the debate has been enriched by virtue of the quantity and quality of proposals that have been put forward. However, the General Assembly has not been able to design a formula that will generate broad consensus and that will avoid divisions among the membership. The history of these debates shows that none of the initiatives has sufficient support to produce a viable reform that could be generally accepted.

It is time to look at this issue from a new and different point of view. Our challenge now is of great systemic and political complexity. From the systemic point of view, our deliberations cannot be guided by any purpose other than guaranteeing that this reform will produce the best possible collective security system. Therefore, the architecture which we design together will have to stand the test of improving the current structure in its task of guaranteeing global peace and security. The structure and the institutional arrangements must be subordinate to the substance that gives the Security Council its reason for being.

From the political point of view, various factors come together in the discussion, such as legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the need to update the Council's composition in the light of the expansion of the United Nations membership, the characteristics — permanent or non-permanent — of the seats and — we cannot avoid it — the changes in the balance of power at the outset of the twenty-first century. Participating in the Security Council is increasingly seen as a source of national prestige and as a means to gain recognition rather than as a very delicate responsibility in preserving a peaceful and safe world.

In this context, over the years there has been a noticeable divorce between the needs of the collective security system and the political considerations of Member States. We should ask ourselves, therefore, whether or not it is feasible to reconcile the system's needs with the individual aspirations of Members. We therefore need a more efficient Security Council than the one we have today, and one that is perceived and recognized as more representative of today's world. We need both conditions to be met.

In order to achieve this double purpose, the structure of the Security Council needs to be sufficiently flexible and able to evolve so as to adjust itself to the changing nature of the international scenario. At the same time, its composition should be sufficiently balanced and meaningful for it to enjoy the legitimacy it needs.

How can we make headway in Security Council reform? In the judgement of Mexico, we require two essential components. First of all, we need a shared assessment of the Security Council's deficiencies, weaknesses and strengths. If we do not agree on what the Security Council is doing well or doing poorly, we will never be able to put forth alternatives to improve it. We will begin the Security Council's reform trip without the right compass.

Secondly, we require a process of open, transparent and inclusive negotiations: intergovernmental negotiations in which Member States discuss the system's current flaws and propose collective strategies to tackle the threats and challenges to international peace and security.

My delegation believes that it would be useful to replicate the format of the consultations and negotiations that were carried out to create the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. It

would be highly appropriate and beneficial to take advantage of that mechanism, which has already proven to be effective.

The reform of the Security Council will move forward only if we build a shared negotiating environment in which opinions can be offered, so that each Member State can explain its motivations and concerns: an environment in which we can jointly find common ground and thus build a more modern, more effective Security Council that is able to act with greater legitimacy on behalf of the entire international community.

With that in mind, my delegation requests the President of the General Assembly to work on a proposal to undertake negotiations that could guide us in crystallizing this necessary reform. Mexico will participate in a committed and constructive fashion in this important exercise.

The meeting rose at 6:15 p.m.